

Going For the Gold: Cooper School Triathlon Team

PROBLEM OVERVIEW:

Goal: To provide an environment that meets the nutritional and physical needs, as well as, addressing the overall wellbeing of our urban school community.

Though formal and informal analysis of our school community we found:

- 77% of our parents felt Good Health was the most important factor to their children becoming successful.
- 46% felt eating habits and 35% felt lacks of school physical education programs were the number one and two contributors to the increase number of children who are overweight/obese.
- 78% felt that Physical Education classes could help control or prevent childhood obesity.
- Cooper School enrollment for 2007 – 2008 was:
- 383 students
- 18%: Special Education Students (Speech & Language students only not include in percentage).
- 3%: Asian
- 21%: Hispanic
- 57%: White
- 8%: Other
- 44% Free/Reduced Lunch

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Our partners in "Going For the Gold" involved school staff members (specifically the Healthy Child Team as Lead), parents, students (Healthy Child Team, Junior as Leads) and community partners (Children's Health Education Center, SAFE KIDS Coalition, PTO, Jump Rope for Heart, etc).

Our Triathlon approach consisted of three key components: Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Wellness. These areas of focus were ongoing and integrated into our daily activities, projects and special events. Though working with the students to generate ideas, promote specific projects and create lessons allowed us to incorporate activities in our daily routines. We found this approach allowed us to change behaviors in a subtle, but meaningful manner.

Our targeted audience was the entire Cooper School community. Our aim was to promote healthy lifestyles for our students as well as our staff members and families. Some activities addressed healthy food choices and additional fitness activities for families (dances, student recipe book, recreational programs) placed emphasis on nutrition and fitness during the school day for students (Jump Rope for Heart, Healthy Snack Days, Read Across America) and for the staff instituted and promoted of a Walking Club, after school intramural programs and in-services. We evaluate the effectiveness of our activities through parent surveys, participation rates, and informal comments from students, parents, and staff.

The Governor's Health Award created the challenge we needed to get our school in motion – for us, it was the catalyst for change. Our goal of, Gold Level, was the motivating force behind our quest for excellence. This award program encouraged us to evaluate our existing practices and policies to create an action plan so as to meet and or exceed the state health and fitness standards.

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY OUTCOMES:

Triathlon Events:

Nutrition:

Staff: Fattening Fluff Food Fridays turned into Healthy Food Fridays.
Students: Monthly Healthy Snack Day and Student created Healthy Recipe Book
Community: Fundraising opportunities went from candy to material products.

Physical Education:

Staff: Created a staff walking club and intramural program (volleyball).
Students: Began weekly Ride and Roll to School Days & after School Dances.
Community: Persuaded the School Board to use Cooper as a Recreation Site.

Wellness:

Staff: Supported the district implementation of Wellness Program.
Students: Created the Healthy Child Junior Team/Walking Field Trips
Community: Implemented Community Programs (Munchin' & Movin')

Outcomes:

Awards: Governor's Health Award – Gold Level
Drug Free School Grant
Promotions: Featured MPS school for Active Apple Walk
News: Milwaukee Public Schools Wellness & Prevention Website
Participation: Presented at New Wisconsin Promise Conference
Participated in DPI Governor's School Health Award Program Evaluation Study

COOPER'S STORY:

Going For the Gold

At Cooper School our goals revolve around meeting the needs of the whole child (socially, ethically, emotionally, cognitively, linguistically, and physically). Staff members work collaboratively to meet the needs of all students through differentiated instruction. We believe all children can be successful. The accomplishment which we are most proud of and what we feel is the driving force behind our overall success related to the Governor's Health Award is the creation and implementation of the Healthy Child Team.

The Cooper School Healthy Child Team (HCT) was initiated during the 2004 – 2005 school year. It incorporates the Milwaukee Public School Board, the Greater Milwaukee Civic Community and Cooper School initiatives and ideas. Our program targets students in grades K3 – 8th. Participation rates among students, staff and parents vary depending on the activity. The HCT offers opportunities for everyone at all levels to be engaged in extra curricular activities such as: National Walk & Ride to School (94% participation), Read and WALK across America (100% participation), Healthy Child Team Jr. (30 students – 4 adults), Walking Club (90%

participation), Intramural Programs (288 students), Ropes & Challenges Course (90% participation), and Field Day (100% participation) to name a few. We have also hosted Artist Residency projects (dance focus), After School Dances, and Roller-Skating. Our school is a Physical Education Program (PEP) grant recipient which provided physical education equipment and includes yearly membership for our 3 – 5th grade parents and families at the Y.M.C.A.

An extension of the HCT is our Healthy Child Junior Team, which was created by an individual student who saw situations around the school that she wanted to change. The team began with two students and has grown to include 30 students, our Food Service Manager and three other staff members. Members meet bi-monthly to discuss school related fitness, health and nutrition. They have written and received a grant from the Department of Public Instruction, created a recipe book that contains healthy snack ideas for the students and host monthly Healthy Snack Days. The team has played key roles in our Dr. Seuss Day by providing healthy snacks from Dr. Seuss Books such as Schlotozes Knots (pretzels), and Glunker Stew (fruit cocktail). The sale of fresh fruit and water by the team was a welcomed change from the traditional candy bars. Students would often express their disappointment if we ran out of fruit or water on any given day. Finally, the student team would make morning announcements and presentations on the importance of healthy eating habits and lifestyle.

We run our program on the ideas and innovations created by staff and students. Our physical education curriculum is online, as well as, our district's wellness policy. Our staff fills out activity charts provided by and created by the physical education teacher to keep track of classroom activity to record the amount of time spent on activities related to health, fitness, and nutrition. Individual teachers have their classes design and keep fitness logs and calendars, as well as, class debates on issues contributing to obesity and nutrition. Our school has established a staff walking club to actively promote and model a walking club for our students.

Our program's design and operation overlaps with the greater Milwaukee Community as well. We select community programs and projects to incorporate into our program that are of minimal or no financial cost or where materials necessary for implementation are supplied by the originating source. We have found that by securing and nurturing a partnership with one organization has lead to invitations from other organizations to either assist or implement their fitness or health project into our school community. The two organizations that have provided the greatest opportunities for our school community are the Milwaukee School Board and the SAFE KIDS Coalition. The school board has provided us with opportunities related to staff development, wellness programs, participation in the Ropes & Challenge Course and as a designated recipient of the Physical Education Program grant. It is through our connection with the SAFE KIDS Coalition that we have secured a working relationship with the American Heart Association, Wisconsin Bike Federation and the Health Education Center (Children's Hospital Lead Agency). Sustaining working relationships with the above groups require us to be flexible with our plans and schedules. Through the Healthy Child Team, we organize a yearly plan of dates for implementation of activities. Our administration allows us to participate and send representatives to community meetings, we have established a working relationship with our alderman, and have invited the community to host activities and events in our building. This rapport and building measures has brought us continued community support. Finally, at the school level, we write numerous small grant proposals and volunteer to be participants of

community grant projects.

Although it has taken time to implement ideas, strategies, and share visions; we feel we have created an atmosphere where by fitness, nutrition, and wellness are on the forefront. It is because of dedication and perseverance that our school has become a great community asset.

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